



IRON MOUNTAIN LAKE, MISSOURI

MISSOURI STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

2014

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MISSION STATEMENT

MISSOURI STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

(Adopted Nov. 4, 1999)

Our **VISION**

The Missouri State Rehabilitation Council envisions a society that values all of its members equally and provides opportunities so that all people are able to meet their needs, fulfill their dreams and participate in society.

Our **MISSION**

To ensure that persons with disabilities have opportunities to be as productive as possible by advising Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation that services provided to persons with disabilities are:

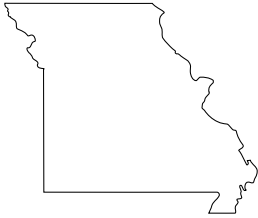
- ◆ of the highest quality.
- ◆ consumer directed.
- ◆ responsive to consumer choice.
- ◆ effective.
- ◆ individualized.
- ◆ culturally specific and relevant to labor market trends.

Our **RESPONSIBILITIES**

To work in partnership with Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation to achieve positive outcomes for persons with disabilities by:

- ◆ providing input on the state plan, policies and practices affecting services to persons with disabilities.
- ◆ identifying strategies to address the needs of people who are not being served or who are being underserved.
- ◆ obtaining and interpreting consumer input.
- ◆ identifying corrective action consistent with that input.
- ◆ advocating for adequate resources to ensure that the rehabilitation needs of all Missourians are met.

To support Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation in complying with applicable laws such as the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Workforce Investment Act, the Rehabilitation Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.



MISSOURI STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

3024 Dupont Circle ■ Jefferson City, Missouri 65109
Phone: 573-751-3251 ■ Fax: 573-751-1441

Dennis Atkins
Viburnum
Chairperson

Aimee Wehmeier
St. Louis
Vice Chairperson

James Ankrom
Smithville

Daniel Cayou
Jefferson City

Judy Heard
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Robert Hosutt
Eureka

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Mary Kay Savage
Kansas City

Mary Stodden
St. Charles

Tim Tadlock
Gallatin

Mary Tallarico
St. Louis

Brent Yerian
Jefferson City

C. Jeanne Loyd
Jefferson City
Ex Officio Member
VR Assistant Commissioner

December 31, 2014

The Honorable Jay Nixon
Governor of Missouri
State Capitol
Jefferson City, Missouri 65101

Dear Governor Nixon:

On behalf of the members of the Missouri State Rehabilitation Council, I am pleased to present the Council's annual report for fiscal year 2014. In these pages, you will find the progress made by Missouri citizens who were served by vocational rehabilitation programs.

Each Council member has unique experiences in advocating for the rights of our fellow Missourians whose physical or mental disabilities may pose barriers to productive employment. Through our quarterly meetings and committee deliberations, we have given our support to Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation to empower individuals with disabilities and to encourage decisions that lead to greater self-sufficiency.

We have advised Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation on innovative programming to reach underserved populations in the state, and we have recommended new methods of obtaining consumer satisfaction feedback.

It has been my great privilege to work with members of the Council, as well as with Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation staff, all of whom are dedicated to providing our citizens with the opportunity to make choices in obtaining meaningful employment. Employment is a key to independence.

Sincerely,

Dr. Dennis W. Atkins
Chairperson

STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL MEMBERS



Dennis Atkins
Viburnum
Chairperson



C. Jeanne Loyd
Jefferson City
Ex Officio Member
VR Assistant Commissioner



Aimee Wehmeier
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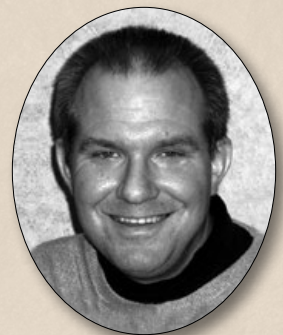
Mary Stodden
St. Charles



Tim Tadlock
Gallatin



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St. Louis



Brent Yerian
Jefferson City

COUNCIL'S PURPOSE

The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) was first authorized by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended in 1998 (referred to hereafter as the Act). Section 105 of the Act requires the state vocational rehabilitation agency to establish a council.

The SRC was initially formed on June 1, 1993. Members are appointed by the governor and serve no more than two consecutive three-year terms. As required by the Act, SRC members represent the Statewide Independent Living Council; the Parent Training and Information Center; the Client Assistance Program; the Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program; the Office of Special Education, which is the state agency responsible for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; the State Workforce Investment Board; community rehabilitation program service providers; disability advocacy groups; current or former applicants/recipients of vocational rehabilitation services; and business, industry and labor.

The SRC is responsible for reviewing, analyzing and advising VR regarding its performance on such issues as eligibility; the extent, scope and effectiveness of services; and any other functions affecting people with disabilities. Full SRC meetings are held quarterly on the first Thursday of February, May, August and November at the VR Central Office in Jefferson City. Subcommittees meet as needed throughout the year via conference calls.

During FY14, the SRC was actively involved with VR in the activities below.

Provided recommendations to VR on policy revisions and rule changes

Coordinated and participated in presentations and activities with other councils and agencies including the Missouri Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, the Client Assistance Program, the State Independent Living Council, the Department of Mental Health, the Parent Training and Information Center, the Technical Assistance and Continuing Education Program, the Hearing Loss Association, the Governor's Council on Disability, the Division of Workforce Development, and the Office of Special Education

Attended and participated in VR public hearings to provide input on the state plan

Evaluated and provided recommendations on the effectiveness of vocational rehabilitation services and consumer satisfaction feedback

Reviewed and provided recommendations to VR regarding the state plan's comprehensive statewide needs assessment, goals, priorities, standards and performance indicators, and comprehensive system of personnel development

Assisted VR staff in preparing the SRC's 2014 annual report for the governor and the commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration on the status of vocational rehabilitation services in Missouri

Provided comments to VR regarding issues pertaining to waiting lists (Order of Selection)

MISSION, VISION & PRINCIPLES

Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation

Mission

Our mission is to provide opportunities and resources to eligible individuals with disabilities leading to successful employment.

Vision

Our vision is to provide everyone with a great VR experience.

Operating Principles

We will:

- ◆ Act with a sense of urgency.
- ◆ Provide quality customer service.
- ◆ Maximize our resources.
- ◆ Do the right thing.
- ◆ Put people first.
- ◆ Continuously evaluate our practices/processes.

Helping people with disabilities work successfully

December 31, 2014

The Honorable Jay Nixon
Governor of Missouri
State Capitol
Jefferson City, Missouri 65101

Dear Governor Nixon:

The annual report presented to you from the Missouri State Rehabilitation Council for fiscal year 2014 provides information on the Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation employment program for individuals with disabilities.

Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation has operated under an Order of Selection since October 2003 due to the number of applicants requesting services, rising service costs and limited federal funding. The Rehabilitation Act requires eligible individuals with the most significant disabilities to receive services first. All other eligible individuals receive services as funds become available.

Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation cleared the waiting list for services during FY14 and helped 4,874 individuals reach successful employment outcomes. The program met six of the seven Federal Standards and Performance Indicators and had a success rate of 61.7 percent for the individuals who received services and exited the program.

Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation works closely with school districts across the state and provides services to eligible transition-age youths. In FY14, the program assisted over 1,600 transition-age individuals in reaching their employment goals with a 66.1 percent success rate.

Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation grant dollars expended for purchased client services from community vendors are effective and help local economies. In addition, the total annual increase in earnings from referral to closure for competitively employed clients in FY14 was over \$61 million. The program's customer satisfaction survey results are consistently among the top in the nation.

In closing, the Council and I offer our sincere appreciation for your personal interest and support in serving people with disabilities.

Sincerely,



C. Jeanne Loyd
Assistant Commissioner
Office of Adult Learning and Rehabilitation Services

VR HIGHLIGHTS

*Important items to note
from FYI 4 regarding
VR's positive impact
on the quality
of consumers' lives
and the communities
it serves include:*

- ★ **4,874** consumers with disabilities achieved successful employment outcomes.
- ★ **29,478** consumers worked with VR counselors.
- ★ **96%** of successfully employed consumers had significant disabilities.
- ★ **799** consumers were successfully employed through supported employment services.
- ★ **1,640** transition-age consumers reached successful employment outcomes.
- ★ **\$61,470,500** was the total annual increase in income from referral to closure for 4,825 competitively employed consumers.

AGENCY OVERVIEW

Prepared on behalf of the SRC, this annual report highlights various programs and services of VR during federal fiscal year 2014 (Oct. 1, 2013, to Sept. 30, 2014).

On Oct. 1, 2003, due to insufficient funds to serve all eligible consumers, VR began operating under an Order of Selection with three priority categories. Eligible consumers with the most significant disabilities are required by law to receive services first (Category 1). Eligible consumers who have less significant disabilities are required to be placed on a waiting list for services (Categories 2 and 3).

During FY14, VR counselors worked with more than 29,000 people in various categories with an average daily census greater than 15,000. VR helped 4,874 consumers reach successful employment outcomes and cleared the waiting list for services.

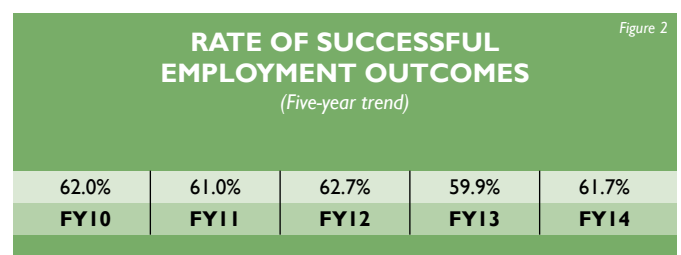
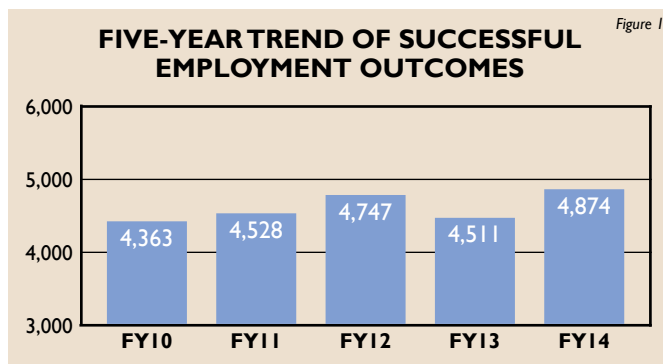
Figures 1-2 (below) illustrate the number of successful outcomes and the percentages of success during the past five years. Figure 2 shows that in FY14, more than 61 percent of consumers who received services through VR were successfully employed. This figure is a percentage of all eligible consumers leaving VR who received services.



Garrett Lawrence, a former VR client, works as a consumer conference co-chair for the Department of Mental Health.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

On July 22, 2014, President Obama signed into law the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), which reauthorized the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 through 2020. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, “WIOA is designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy.” With regard to VR, WIOA makes amendments to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Some of the areas in which this legislation will affect the program include employment for individuals with disabilities, employer relationships, services for transition-age youths, and collaboration with other federal/state agencies and partners.





C. Marty Exline, director of Missouri Assistive Technology, spoke to the SRC at its November meeting about assistive technology services for individuals with disabilities.

State Funding and the Social Security Reimbursement Program

VR receives state funding from the general revenue fund, the Missouri Lottery and the Department of Mental Health. The match requirement is 21.3 percent state funding and 78.7 percent federal funding.

The Social Security Administration (SSA) reimburses state vocational rehabilitation agencies for the costs of providing services to assist SSA disability recipients in becoming gainfully employed. VR uses Ticket Tracker software to interface with VR's case-management system. The software matches and identifies consumers receiving SSA disability benefits whom VR helped in reaching their employment goals. Ticket Tracker has streamlined the consumer identification and reimbursement submission process, enabling VR to receive SSA reimbursements in a more timely and efficient manner. In FY14, VR received \$1,668,621 in reimbursement claims. A portion of this funding helps support the Centers for Independent Living.

Consumer Satisfaction

Consumer satisfaction with staff and services is a VR priority. The SRC is responsible for reviewing and analyzing consumer satisfaction. On behalf of the SRC, VR administers a consumer satisfaction survey (pages 22-23). Feedback is shared with management, supervisors and counselors. This information is used as a tool to improve services, evaluate staff performance and determine training needs.

During FY14, online and mail-out survey tools were utilized to obtain consumer feedback from a random sample of all cases open and closed. Results showed that 97 percent of consumers surveyed felt they were treated with respect, 95 percent knew that the purpose of VR is to help them find or keep a job, and 92 percent felt that staff was available when needed.

For a complete breakdown of the consumer satisfaction survey, see page 23.



Kelly Cook, VR assistant director of deaf/hard of hearing services and independent living services supervisor, discussed the cooperative agreement between VR and Missouri Assistive Technology at the SRC's November meeting.

Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment

VR and the SRC jointly conduct an annual comprehensive statewide assessment of the rehabilitation needs of Missourians with disabilities. The conclusions and recommendations of the assessment are incorporated into VR's goals and priorities for the purpose of improving services for individuals with disabilities.

VR uses many methods to collect information for the assessment including consumer satisfaction surveys, public hearings, VR strategic teams, SRC input, VR case data and national census statistics.

Two areas that the assessment specifically focuses on are the needs of individuals with disabilities who are minorities and individuals from populations that have been traditionally unserved or underserved by vocational rehabilitation programs. The needs assessment completed in FY14 identified the minority populations of Hispanics and African-Americans, along with individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and individuals with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), as underserved.

VR implements several strategies to address these areas of need. For strategy information, see pages 17-18.

Vocational Rehabilitation Teams

VR continues to enlist the aid of teams consisting of agency staff, providers and consumers to develop recommendations for strategic plan issues. The following teams meet on an ad hoc basis: Community Rehabilitation Providers/Vocational Rehabilitation, Transition, Cultural Diversity and Assistive Technology. As a result, many recommendations, which can be found throughout this report, have been implemented to improve services for people with disabilities.



John Effinger, program coordinator at Missouri Assistive Technology, demonstrated several assistive technology devices for the SRC and explained the many tools that are available for individuals with disabilities.

INTERAGENCY COOPERATION

Division of Workforce Development

The Division of Workforce Development operates under the Department of Economic Development. The division ensures that the provisions of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998, and continuing with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014, are carried out by workforce development centers across the state. The Missouri Training and Employment Council is the state board that oversees workforce development.

The workforce development system is a partnership of mandated federal, state and local agencies providing services in one-stop shops known as Missouri Career Centers. Located in 14 regions throughout the state, Missouri Career Centers offer job-training and skills-development programs to all citizens who want assistance with gaining employment. VR is a key partner and works closely with Missouri Career Centers to provide program accessibility, physical access to services and assistive technology for people with disabilities. VR also provides ongoing cross-training and technical assistance to their staff on accommodations in the workplace. VR's director of workforce development collaborates with partner agencies to ensure that all federal regulations pertaining to Title IV of WIA (and continuing with WIOA) are followed. VR professional staff serve as active members on all 14 local Workforce Investment Boards.

Department of Mental Health

The Department of Mental Health's (DMH) Division of Behavioral Health (DBH) and VR started working together in 2009 on a supported employment grant funded by the Johnson & Johnson-Dartmouth Psychiatric Research Center project. The mission of the Johnson & Johnson-Dartmouth Community Mental Health Program is to increase access to evidence-based supported employment, also known as Individual Placement and Support (IPS), for adults with serious mental illnesses who are interested in improving their work lives. This national program systematically collaborates with states to implement supported employment following the evidence-based guidelines, initially in a small number of sites (typically three to four) and expanding statewide over time. The program is administered in each participating state through a partnership between the state mental health authority and the state vocational rehabilitation administration. Because funding for the grant has ended, this program has moved beyond the pilot stage to sustaining current sites and expanding to different locations throughout the state.

Missouri has 11 Community Mental Health/Treatment Centers (CMHCs) participating in this implementation collaborative. Ongoing technical assistance and fidelity reviews to the evidence-based practice are provided by a state trainer and a team consisting of VR and DMH employees. Three sites have improved to "exemplary" fidelity and have increased the number of people successfully employed in competitive jobs. The partnership between DMH and VR includes a training format, offered to interested CMHCs statewide, on adopting IPS and on improving existing employment activities within treatment services.

Additional partner activities include sponsoring an employment summit with the Missouri Coalition for Community Behavioral Healthcare to facilitate the clinical integration of behavioral health and community employment efforts. VR and DMH/DBH also co-fund DB101, a customized Missouri benefits-planning website.

Centers for Independent Living

Centers for Independent Living (CILs) are community-based nonresidential programs designed to promote independent living for people with disabilities. In Missouri, there are 22 CILs that offer independent living services. The CILs are funded through VR grants and are managed by local boards composed of individuals with disabilities who have been successful in establishing their own independent lifestyles.

VR works with the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) and the CILs to provide services to individuals with disabilities. Together, the SILC, VR and the CILs collaborate to develop the State Plan for Independent Living. The plan contains three main goals: 1) identify and respond to the unmet needs of individuals with disabilities in Missouri, 2) provide a responsive network of supports and services to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities, and 3) improve the quality of life for individuals who are blind or visually impaired. ([Click here](#) to download the complete plan.)

As part of a collaborative effort to evaluate program effectiveness, VR and the SILC utilize an outcome-based measurement tool for the CILs. This tool measures consumer satisfaction with various services provided by the centers. The most recent survey results revealed that 97 percent of respondents were satisfied with adaptive equipment/assistive technology services, personal assistance services and emergency assistance services.

TRANSITION SERVICES

The Rehabilitation Services Administration defines transition-age consumers as individuals with disabilities ages 16 through 24. VR assists these consumers either in or outside of the secondary school setting to successfully prepare them for moving into postsecondary education, integrated employment (including supported employment) or vocational training.

In striving to improve and expand the quality of services for transition-age consumers with significant disabilities in high school, VR provides support and technical assistance to local school districts. In addition, the Transition Team – which is composed of personnel from VR, school districts and other state/community agencies – provides support on transition-related activities and services for youths with disabilities.

A team represented by the CILs, local education agencies and VR has created and released a resource toolkit to strengthen collaboration in transition planning for young adults with disabilities. The toolkit focuses on joint service delivery and contains valuable transition-related resources.



In May 2014, the students pictured above graduated from the Seamless Transitions through Enhanced Partnership (STEP) program that helps improve the transition from high school to the workforce for students with disabilities. VR is a partner in the STEP program. From left to right: Desmond Fisher, Karen Morgan (STEP coordinator), Fahim Flanagan, Brandon Ingalls, Dominick Williams and Graham Riffle.

FY14 Transition Services Facts

- ◆ 1,640 transition-age consumers reached successful employment outcomes.
- ◆ 66% of all transition-age consumers who received VR services and exited the program achieved successful employment outcomes.

COMMUNITY REHAB PROGRAMS

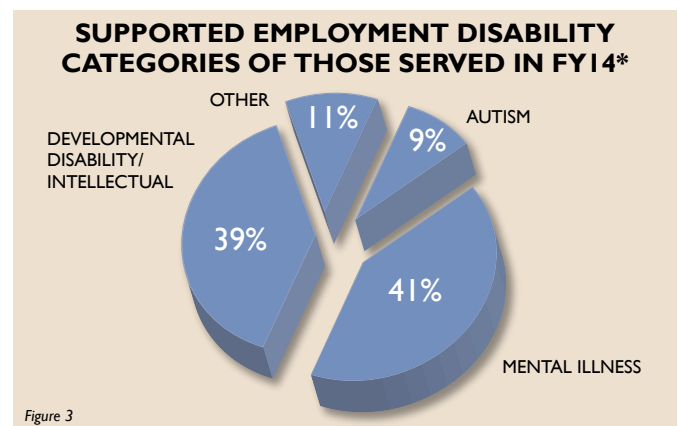
VR strives to enhance community rehabilitation services throughout Missouri. VR and Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) collaboratively work with an outcome-based service model that emphasizes quality employment outcomes. CRPs are nonprofit organizations accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities. All independently owned and operated, they provide people with vocational planning, job development and placement services, skills training, specialized employment services, and supported employment.

During FY14, 6,058 consumers who exited the system received services from both VR and CRPs. The CRP/VR Team composed of CRP staff and VR managers, supervisors and counselors meets periodically to improve community-based employment services for individuals with disabilities. This team developed and continues to refine a model of employment services that took effect on Oct. 1, 2010. This outcome promotes collaboration among the consumer, the VR counselor and the CRP. Outcome milestones include the development of employment plans, placement, retention and successful employment outcomes. VR worked with the team to develop incentives for CRPs based on whether consumers are placed in employment at or above 55 percent of state average wages. Incentive areas are reviewed annually to determine if they are needed based upon VR's comprehensive statewide needs assessment.

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

VR provides Supported Employment (SE) services to a diverse population of consumers as indicated by Figures 3-5 (pages 15-16). SE is defined as competitive work in an integrated work setting with ongoing support services for individuals with the most significant disabilities. During FY14, 67.3 percent of consumers who received SE services and exited the program were successfully employed.

In FY14, VR worked with 84 CRPs that provide SE services and cover all counties in Missouri. VR and the CRP/VR Team also developed an outcome-based model of SE services that was implemented on Oct. 1, 2012. The new model features a period of discovery and exploration with the consumer to develop vocational direction and community-based job exploration. Outcomes include job placement, 30 days of independent employment and 90 days of employment. In addition to these milestones, on-the-job and off-site supports may also be authorized for consumers.



Other Supported Employment Statistics

VR places an emphasis on the development of natural support systems to help consumers participating in supported employment successfully remain in the workforce. These natural supports help to reduce the costs of providing SE services. Figure 6 (page 16) shows the hourly wages, average costs of services and other statistics for supported employment.

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT ETHNICITY AND GENDER OF THOSE SERVED* • FY14 •

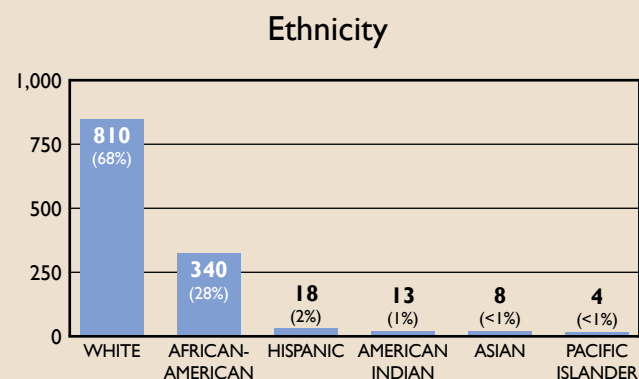


Figure 4

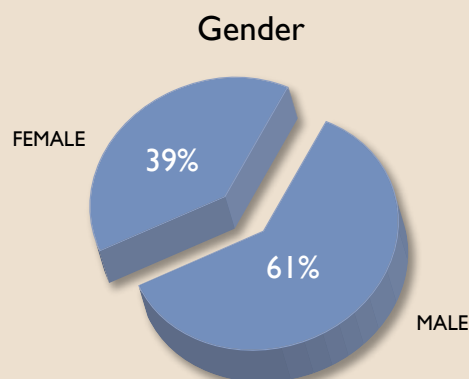


Figure 5

OTHER SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS FOR FY14

Figure 6

Average cost of supported employment per consumer	\$2,799*
Average hourly wage per consumer	\$8.28
Average hours per week worked per consumer	23
Success rate	67.3%*
Successful closures	799
Unsuccessful closures after services rendered	394

*Statistics are based on the number of consumers who exited the program either successfully or unsuccessfully after receiving SE services.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

In FY14, VR provided a variety of assistive technology services, devices and equipment to 689 individuals who received services and exited the program, for a total cost of \$7,060,386. VR purchases assistive devices to help consumers with increasing, maintaining or improving functional capabilities. These devices may be purchased commercially or modified/customized by a technology specialist. Devices could be as simple as a modified door handle or as sophisticated as a voice-controlled computer system. Other types include prosthetic and orthotic equipment, hearing aids, wheelchairs, and other powered mobility equipment. Assistive technology services include evaluation, design, customization, adaptation, maintenance, repair, therapy and technical training.

VR and Missouri Assistive Technology (MoAT) have collaborated to develop a cooperative agreement to ensure the maximum statewide utilization of services. The agreement provides a plan for service coordination; for using resources to the best advantage; for information sharing, technical support and training; to facilitate the referral of potentially eligible individuals between agencies; and to help eligible people obtain assistive technology services. A VR staff member is a representative on the MoAT Advisory Council.

VR has appointed an Assistive Technology Team to help meet consumers' needs. Issues the team focuses on include best case practices; ongoing training; vehicle modification guidelines; and mobility, augmentative and computer assistive technology assessments. The team is developing a resource manual for all VR staff and will provide statewide training upon the manual's completion.

In April, MoAT sponsored the statewide Power Up 2014 Conference and Expo that was open to service providers, consumers, independent living specialists, VR staff and other professionals in the rehabilitation field. Eighteen of VR's professional staff attended the event. The conference was successful in providing consumers and professionals with an opportunity to view state-of-the-art technology and equipment designed to enhance and promote the independence and quality of life of people with disabilities.

DIVERSITY & UNDERSERVED

Improving services for underserved populations and workplace diversity are two significant priorities for VR and the SRC. Figure 7 (below) reflects the closure percentages by ethnicity for FY14. VR remains committed to improving services, increasing employment outcomes and reducing the number of consumers from underserved populations who drop out prior to receiving services.

Cultural Diversity and Underserved Populations

During FY14, VR provided employees with training opportunities on cultural competency that covered aspects of diversity. VR conducted a comprehensive statewide needs assessment that identified individuals with ASD, individuals with TBI, and individuals from the Hispanic and African-American communities as being underserved.

VR utilizes the following strategies to address these areas of need:

CLOSURE PERCENTAGES BY ETHNICITY
(FY14 consumers)

STATUS	WHITE	AFRICAN-AMERICAN	OTHER
4,874 successful employment outcomes	76%	20%	4%
3,021 closed unsuccessfully after services	67%	29%	4%
5,407 closed after eligibility before services	68%	28%	4%
	FY14	FY14	FY14

Figure 7

- ◆ VR employs a part-time diversity consultant to assist with improving services to underserved areas, developing training programs and establishing outreach strategies for consumers from diverse cultures.
- ◆ The Cultural Diversity Team (composed of CRP staff, the diversity consultant and VR district office staff) meets throughout the year to develop strategies for serving individuals from diverse cultures.
- ◆ VR has appointed an autism services liaison to serve as a resource for its staff throughout the state. This liaison works with providers on strategies for better serving individuals with ASD.
- ◆ VR has developed Employment Services Plus, which is designed to assist individuals with ASD, TBI or cultural deafness/hearing loss who require additional supports to reach successful employment outcomes.



The VR Cultural Diversity Team met in FY14 to discuss strategies for serving individuals with disabilities from diverse cultures.

FY14 EMPLOYEE DIVERSITY

EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES

Counselors	31%
District and assistant supervisors	23%
Administrators	23%
Total professional staff	23%
Support staff	16%

MINORITY EMPLOYEES

Counselors	13%
African-American . .	10%
Other	3%
District and assistant supervisors	17%
African-American . .	14%
Other	3%
Administrators	7%
African-American . .	7%
Total professional staff	11%
African-American . .	10%
Other	1%
Support staff	18%
African-American . .	17%
Other	1%

Figure 8

Diversity in the Workplace

VR strives to recruit, hire and maintain a diverse workforce. Figure 8 (left) shows the specific categories of VR employees as of Sept. 30, 2014.

VR recruits individuals with culturally diverse backgrounds. All job openings are listed on the VR and Missouri Career Source websites and are sent to the CILs. Vacancies are advertised in local newspapers as well as African-American and Hispanic newspapers. All VR counselor vacancy notices are sent to historically black colleges and universities such as Lincoln University in Jefferson City; Southern University in Baton Rouge, La.; Fort Valley State College in Fort Valley, Ga.; and Jackson State University in Jackson, Miss. Recruitment contacts have been made with all colleges in Missouri that have a high population of minority students. VR continues to participate in recruitment activities, career fairs and various community programs.

VR also works to recruit individuals with disabilities. All district supervisors and counselors receive job vacancy notices. Many of the individuals referred by staff are interviewed and hired or participate in field experiences and internships sponsored by VR. At the time of this report, approximately 31 percent of the counselor positions were held by individuals with disabilities.

In addition to VR's recruitment efforts, all staff participate in cultural diversity training initially provided during new employee orientation. This ongoing training, held across the state during FY14, has received positive feedback and is an outcome of one of the Cultural Diversity Team's recommendations.

SUCCESS STORY: WHY NOT?

BY LISA SONE, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR,
JEFFERSON CITY VR CENTRAL OFFICE

“Why not?” is Lynne Green’s mantra. Without it, she might never have pushed through many of her life’s obstacles to become the successful artist she is today.

Born in Yugoslavia, Green came to America at the age of 5 and has spent most of her life since she was 11 in the St. Louis area. At 21, she volunteered for the mayor’s council on youth opportunities. One of the board members liked her work and asked if she would interview as a secretary with a major ad agency. She took the job and discovered she wanted to be a writer, but the agency discouraged her. Asking herself “Why not?” she entered a contest for an ad campaign. She won and was promoted to junior copywriter.

Around age 30, she decided to enroll at Webster University in St. Louis to major in media communications. She was painfully shy so she took acting classes to boost her self-confidence. Finding the inner strength to overcome her shyness, she changed her major to directing. After graduating with honors, she moved to New York where she worked three jobs to make ends meet. At night, she directed plays and won a best director’s award at an international festival.

At 35, Green was burned out. She took a leave of absence from her jobs and moved back to St. Louis. In an unexpected turn of events, her sister passed away, leaving three children for Green to raise. She would never return to New York or her directing career.

To support the children, Green worked as a secretary, taught business classes and did whatever was necessary to raise those in her care. Yet, in another unexpected turn, she developed a severe form of rheumatoid arthritis in her knees that not even surgery could help. The disease was debilitating, and she faced the rest of her life in a wheelchair. She was no longer able to work.

After spending all of her retirement account money on medical bills, Green was broke and felt she no



Lynne Green, a former VR client, continues to run a successful business after VR helped her in setting up her venture. The photograph on her right is one of her many creations.

longer had her independence. She felt lost. For a decade, she was isolated both from others and from her creativity. Before obtaining wheelchair-accessible housing, at one point she spent 13 months living in a basement with no power chair or assistance. To survive, she made decoupage boxes and sold them to friends, who encouraged her to do more. She began making jewelry and working with her photography.

Green knew she had to change her perception and practice her mantra. Again asking herself “Why not?” she went to Paraquad, an independent living center in St. Louis. Paraquad helped her make contacts with companies to find a better wheelchair and referred her to VR.

Green’s goal was to produce videos, so her VR counselor helped her obtain an internship at a small production company in 2000. She was hired as a writer/producer. She wrote and logged tapes that other producers had made, but the arthritis was also in her hands, which made it difficult to perform her job eight hours a day. Her employer was not understanding and was even cruel to her because of her disability, so she quit.

Determined to push forward, in 2009 Green was assigned a new counselor, Barb Hirst, who helped her return to video production to achieve her employment goal. VR paid for video and

photography classes at St. Louis Community College-Meramec to improve her skills. In addition, VR provided start-up money, a computer and video equipment for Green to launch her own business producing videos and making greeting cards.

Green also showed Hirst her photography, which the counselor encouraged her to pursue.

“Barb was so supportive,” Green said.

Still, Green was living somewhat in isolation. She began to wonder “why not” be a writer and “why not” be a director? She saw an ad to submit artwork to VSA Missouri, a nonprofit organization that encourages access to the arts for individuals with disabilities. Green’s digital photograph “Abstract Rose: Blue” was published in the group’s 2011 anthology.

Also in 2011, Hirst approved adaptive equipment to make Green’s van accessible.

“I really needed transportation to progress in my work and build my reputation,” Green said. “It transformed my life. I was free. I could meet people and go to galleries to gain notice of my work.”

Her work has gone on to receive numerous accolades and awards. The Missouri Arts Council asked to feature “Abstract Rose: Blue” as the signature image of the 2014 Missouri Arts Awards. The photograph appears on a poster hanging in the Missouri Capitol, on the invitation and program for the awards ceremony, and on the cover of the council’s 2014 annual report. “Abstract Rose: Blue” has also



This digital photograph, “Abstract Rose: Blue,” has been published numerous times and currently hangs in Missouri’s capitol building as a poster for the Missouri Arts Council.

been featured in Kaleidoscope, an award-winning magazine that uses literature and the fine arts to spotlight disability experiences.

Green said she sees VR as a blessing that gave her the tools to actualize her ideas and fulfill her hopes and dreams. She wants to be a model for others with disabilities.

“We have value,” she said. “Don’t just push us into the background.”

Despite her disability, her talent and creativity have brought her success. She is deeply grateful to VR and to her counselor for the difference they have made in her life. At the age of 70, she continues doing what she loves and is still asking “Why not?”

“I owe VR to be a success,” Green said. “To take what they have given me and work.”

(See Green’s artwork at www.lynnegreen.etsy.com and follow her blog at gerlindastudios.blogspot.com.)



One of Green’s photographs, “Metallic Clematis.”

APPENDICES

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CONSUMER SATISFACTION

The SRC's Program Evaluation Committee continues to work with VR on surveying and monitoring consumer satisfaction. In FY14, VR implemented a new consumer feedback method that utilizes both online and mail-out surveys. This process enables VR to reach a larger audience and offers consumers an additional way to provide input on their services.

On behalf of the SRC, VR surveyed a random sample of 3,628 consumers at various stages in the rehabilitation process, with a response rate of about 12 percent. Survey feedback was positive; the results are listed on page 23.

FY14 CONSUMER COMMENTS

I have a great life. **I HAVE A GREAT JOB, AND I HAVE HEALTH BENEFITS.**

VR has made me **A MORE CONFIDENT PERSON.** I am able to deal with my problems.

In my eyes, they (VR) are **A GREAT TEAM OF PEOPLE.**

VR made me **MORE MOTIVATED TO FIND WORK.**

It's reassuring to **KNOW WE HAVE SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE** they (VR) offer during such an important time.

VR helped me to **BE EMPLOYED AND BE OF SERVICE** to the community.

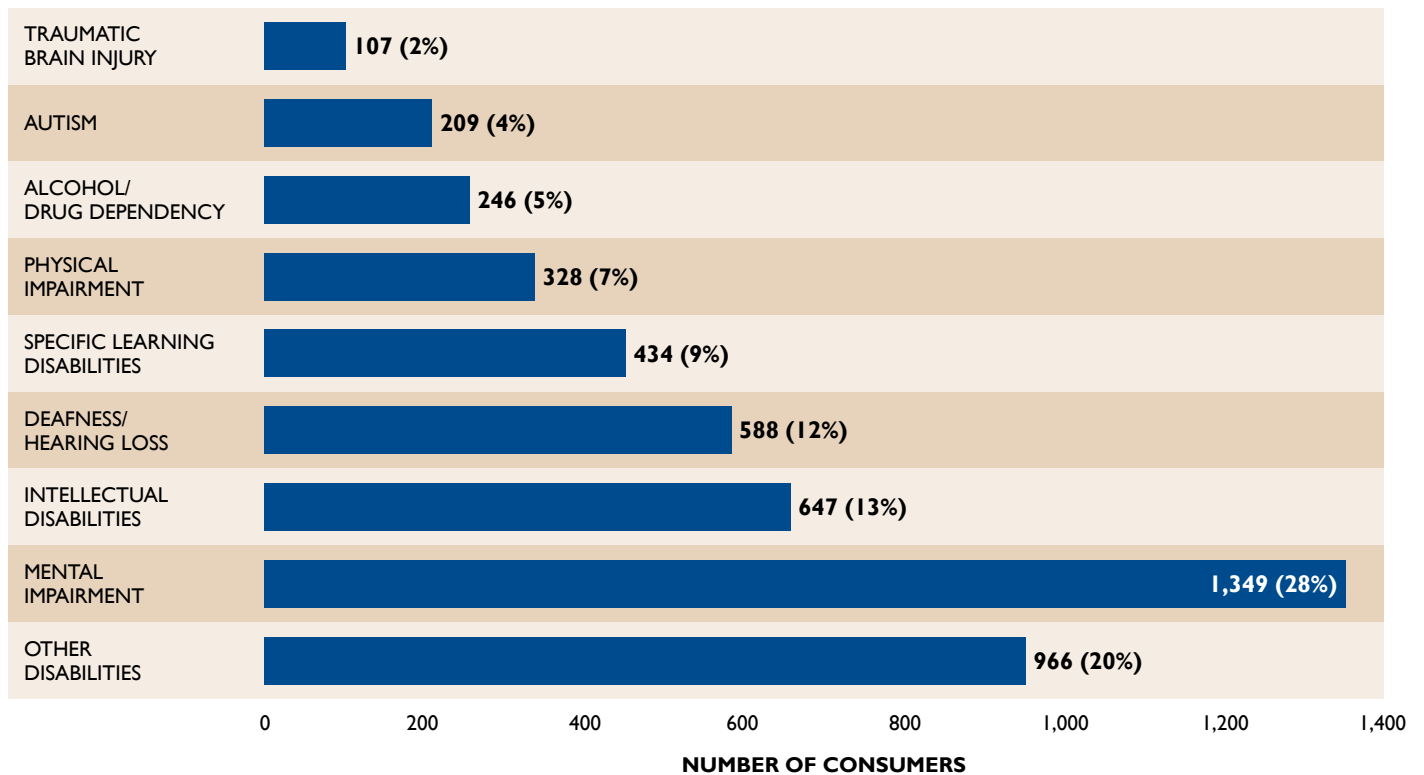
Thanks for giving me a new life.
MY EXPERIENCE WAS PERFECT.

Survey Results <i>(Specific group responses during FY14)</i>	TOTAL RESPONSES RECEIVED	STAFF WAS AVAILABLE		STAFF TREATED ME WITH RESPECT		I KNEW PURPOSE OF VR SERVICES		COUNSELOR HELPED PLAN SERVICES		COUNSELOR EXPLAINED CHOICES	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
TOTAL RESPONSES	445	92%	8%	97%	3%	95%	5%	86%	14%	89%	11%
CONSUMERS WITH SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES (CATEGORIES I AND II)	434	92%	8%	97%	3%	95%	5%	86%	14%	89%	11%
OPEN CASES	240	92%	8%	98%	2%	95%	5%	84%	16%	89%	11%
SUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES	130	96%	4%	99%	1%	96%	4%	93%	7%	93%	7%
UNSUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES; CLOSED BEFORE SERVICES	42	81%	19%	93%	7%	93%	7%	78%	22%	82%	18%
UNSUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES; CLOSED AFTER SERVICES	33	88%	12%	88%	12%	88%	12%	84%	16%	88%	12%
MALE	252	94%	6%	97%	3%	94%	6%	86%	14%	88%	12%
FEMALE	193	90%	10%	98%	2%	96%	4%	87%	13%	90%	10%
SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT CONSUMERS	89	89%	11%	92%	8%	91%	9%	87%	13%	84%	16%
CONSUMERS WITH ALCOHOL OR DRUG DEPENDENCY	16	75%	25%	87%	13%	88%	12%	67%	33%	71%	29%
CONSUMERS WITH AUTISM	17	93%	7%	100%	0%	100%	0%	93%	7%	100%	0%
CONSUMERS WITH DEAFNESS/HEARING LOSS	49	98%	2%	100%	0%	96%	4%	98%	2%	93%	7%
CONSUMERS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES	43	89%	11%	88%	12%	91%	9%	83%	17%	84%	16%
CONSUMERS WITH MENTAL IMPAIRMENTS	130	89%	11%	98%	2%	96%	4%	85%	15%	89%	11%
CONSUMERS WITH PHYSICAL IMPAIRMENTS	117	96%	4%	100%	0%	98%	2%	91%	9%	93%	7%
CONSUMERS WITH SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITIES	26	92%	8%	100%	0%	88%	12%	74%	26%	88%	12%
CONSUMERS WITH TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY	10	100%	0%	100%	0%	90%	10%	86%	14%	89%	11%
CONSUMERS WITH OTHER DISABILITIES	86	95%	5%	98%	2%	93%	7%	93%	7%	92%	8%

DISABILITY CATEGORIES of the 4,874 consumers with successful employment outcomes

FY14

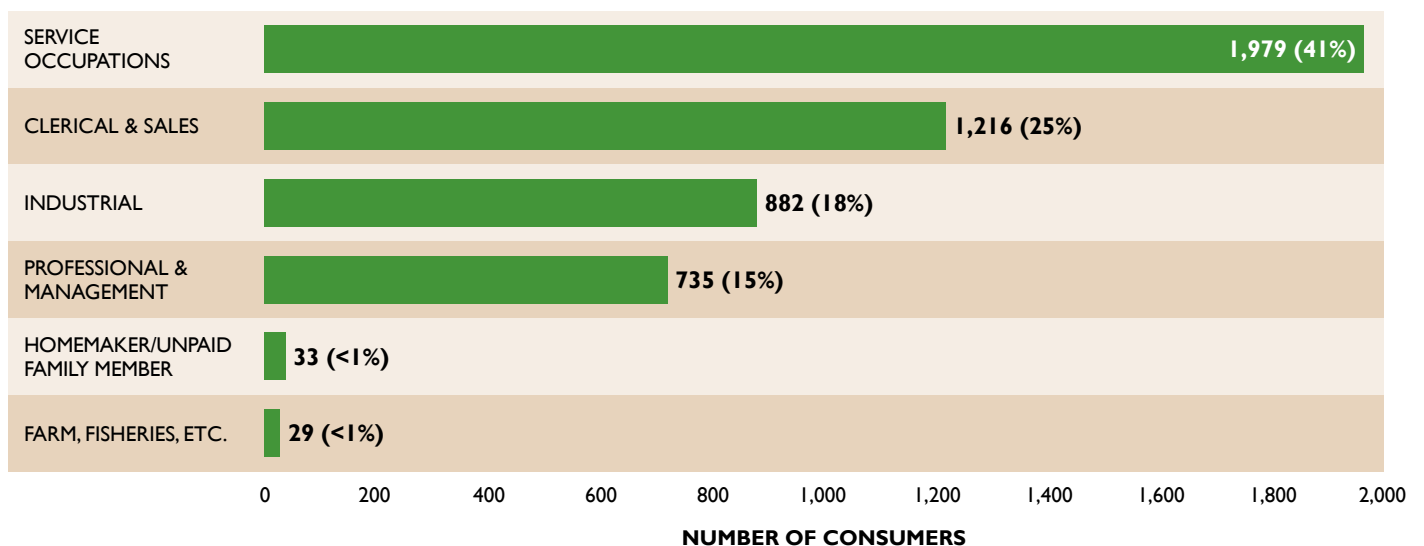
TYPE OF DISABILITY



OCCUPATIONS of the 4,874 consumers with successful employment outcomes

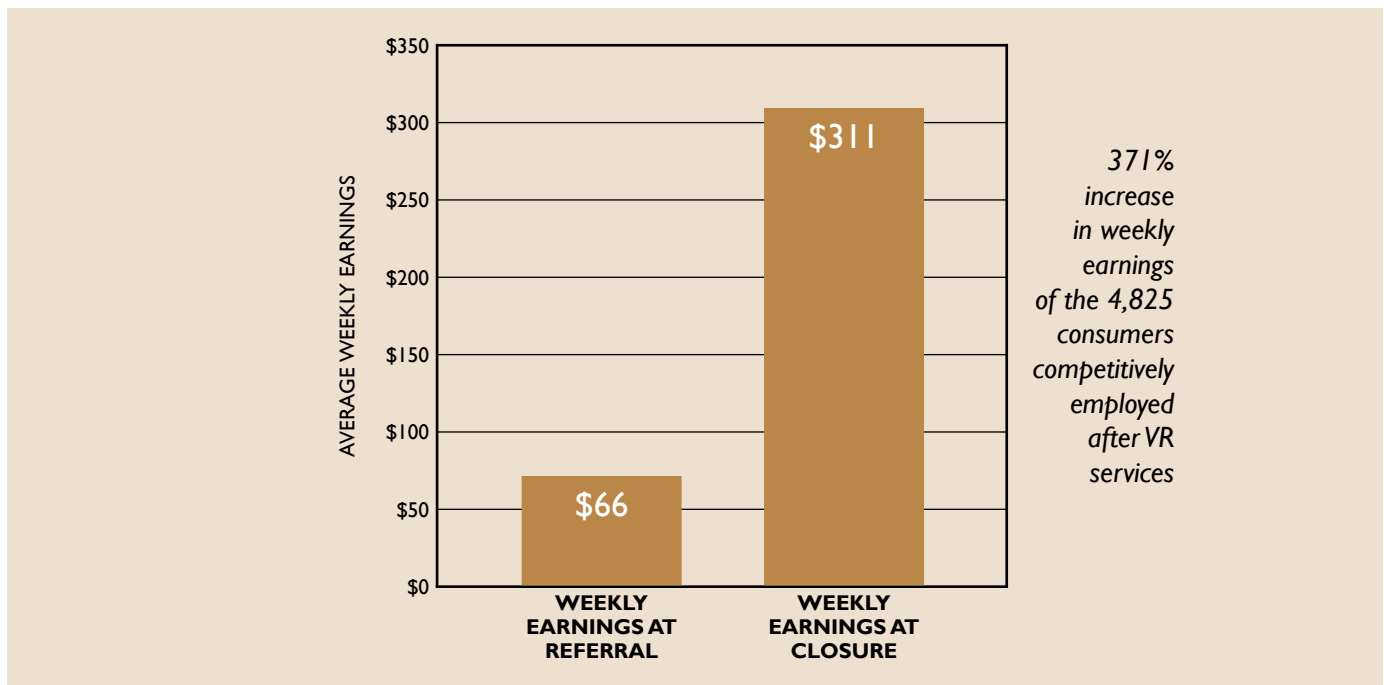
FY14

OCCUPATION



IMPACT OF VR SERVICES on weekly earnings of consumers with successful employment outcomes

FY14



With an increase in average weekly earnings of \$245 for the 4,825 competitively employed consumers, the total annual increase in income from referral to closure amounted to \$61,470,500.

CHARACTERISTICS of consumers with successful employment outcomes

FY14

GENDER	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Male	2,797	57%
Female	2,077	43%
TOTAL	4,874	100%

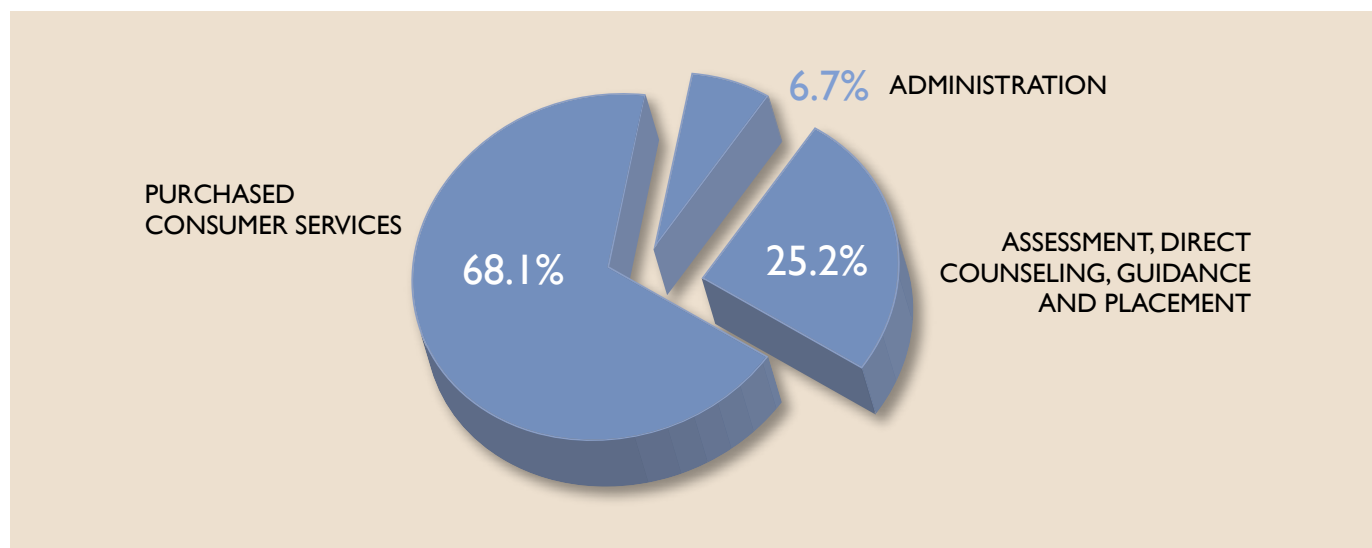
ETHNICITY	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
White	3,692	76%
African-American	1,001	21%
Hispanic	73	1%
American Indian	66	1%
Asian	31	<1%
Pacific Islander	11	<1%
TOTAL	4,874	100%

AGE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Less than 20 years	343	7%
20 through 34	2,093	43%
35 through 44	816	17%
45 through 64	1,458	30%
65 and over	164	3%
TOTAL	4,874	100%

INDICATORS	FEDERAL STANDARDS	MISSOURI VR RESULTS
I.1 Change in Employment Outcomes	≥ Previous year	+363
I.2 Percentage of Employment Outcomes	55.8%	61.7%
I.3 Competitive Employment Outcomes	72.6%	98.9%
I.4 Competitive Employment Outcomes with a Significant Disability	62.4%	96.4%
I.5 Ratio of Exit Wage to State Average Pay	.52	.51
I.6 Difference in the Exiter vs. Application Income as a Single Source of Support	53%	68.4%
2.1 Service Rate of Minority to Non-Minority Individuals with Disabilities	.80	.93

EXPENDITURES

FY14



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